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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5632nd meeting of the Security Council, held on 20 January 2007, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security: role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls the Statement by its President of 12 July 2005, in which it emphasizes that security sector reform is an essential element of any stabilization and reconstruction process in post-conflict environments.

"The Security Council stresses that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments is critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate state authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict. In that regard, a professional, effective and accountable security sector, and accessible and impartial law-enforcement and justice sectors are equally necessary to laying the foundations for peace and sustainable development.

"The Security Council underlines that it is the sovereign right and the primary responsibility of the country concerned to determine the national approach and priorities of security sector reform. It should be a nationally-owned process that is rooted in the particular needs and conditions of the country in question. The Security Council acknowledges that strong support and assistance of the international community are important to build national capacities thereby reinforcing national ownership, which is crucial for the sustainability of the whole process. The Security Council also underlines that the United Nations has a crucial role to play in promoting comprehensive, coherent, and co-ordinated international support to nationally-owned security sector reform programmes, implemented with the consent of the country concerned.

"The Security Council notes that the United Nations system has made significant contributions to the re-establishment of functioning security sectors in post-conflict environments, and that an increasing number of United Nations organs, funds, programmes and agencies are engaged in one aspect or another of security sector reform support activities.

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"The Security Council acknowledges the contribution that non-UN actors, in particular regional, sub-regional and other intergovernmental organisations, including international financial institutions, and bilateral donors as well as non-governmental organizations, can bring in supporting nationally-led security sector reform programmes.

"The Security Council recognises the need when mandating a United Nations operation to consider, as appropriate, and taking into account the concerns of the Member State and other relevant actors, the national security sector reform priorities, while laying the foundation for peace consolidation, which could, inter alia, subsequently enable timely withdrawal of international peacekeepers. The Security Council notes the importance of close interaction among different United Nations system entities, and other relevant actors, in order to ensure that security sector reform considerations are adequately covered during implementation of Security Council mandates.

"The Security Council underlines that security sector reform can be a long-term process that continues well beyond the duration of a peacekeeping operation. In that regard, the Security Council emphasises the important role that the Peacebuilding Commission can play in ensuring continuous international support to countries emerging from conflict. The Security Council takes note of the work already carried out by the Peacebuilding Commission concerning Burundi and Sierra Leone and requests it to continue advising the Council on the issue of security sector reform in the framework of its activities related to these countries. The Security Council requests the Peacebuilding Commission to include consideration of security sector reform programmes in designing integrated peacebuilding strategies for its continued engagement with those countries, with a view to developing best practices regarding comprehensive, coherent, and nationally-owned security sector reform programmes.

"The Security Council emphasises that security sector reform must be context-driven and that the needs will vary from situation to situation. The Security Council encourages states to formulate their security sector reform programmes in a holistic way that encompasses strategic planning, institutional structures, resource management, operational capacity, civilian oversight and good governance. The Security Council emphasises the need for a balanced realisation of all aspects of security sector reform, including institutional capacity, affordability, and sustainability of its programs. The Security Council recognises the inter-linkages between security sector reform and other important factors of stabilisation and reconstruction, such as transitional justice, disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of former combatants, small arms and light weapons control, as well as gender equality, children and armed conflict and human rights issues.

"In light of the above, the Security Council acknowledges the need for a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on United Nations approaches to security sector reform, to foster its implementation in post-conflict environments, and expresses its readiness to consider such a report within the scope of its prerogatives under the UN Charter. The report should identify lessons learned, core security sector reform functions that the United Nations

system can perform, roles and responsibilities of UN system entities, and how best to co-ordinate UN support for security sector reform with national and international activities in this field, as well as interaction with regional and sub-regional actors.

"The Security Council expects the Secretary General's report to make concrete recommendations on the identification, prioritisation and sequencing of United Nations support to nationally-owned security sector reform, with particular emphasis on post-conflict environments. This should include recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of all UN system entities that support security sector reform."

"The Security Council invites the Secretary-General to continue to include, in his periodic reports to the Security Council on specific United Nations operations mandated by the Security Council, whenever appropriate, recommendations related to security sector reform programmes in the countries concerned.

"The Security Council welcomes the joint initiative of Slovakia and South Africa to further discuss this issue with a focus on experiences and challenges of security sector reform in Africa at a workshop to be held in the course of 2007."